

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

*GW/JW*

1. A method for handling material, the method comprising the steps of:
  - a) obtaining digital rights management protected material for a consumer;
  - b) informing a bookshelf that the protected material was obtained;
  - c) determining whether or not there is a existing copy of the protected material;
  - d) storing an existing copy of the protected material automatically for archival purposes at a site remote from the consumer; and
  - e) creating a pointer for the consumer to point to the stored archival material.
2. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the existing copy of the protected material is obtained from the provider of the material.
3. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the existing copy of the protected material is obtained from the vendor of the material.
4. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the existing copy of the protected material is obtained from the consumer of the material.
5. The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the pointer is located in a bookshelf.
6. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of: transferring the consumers rights to the material to a third party.

7. The method claimed in claim 6, further including the step of:  
archiving automatically the transferred material for the third party at a site remote from the third party.
  
8. The method claimed in claim 7, further including the step of:  
creating a pointer for the consumer to point to the transferred archival material.
  
9. The method claimed in claim 8, further including the step of:  
creating a pointer for the third party to point to the transferred archival material.
  
10. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of: transferring a portion of the consumers rights to the material to a third party.
  
11. The method claimed in claim 10, further including the step of: transferring the consumers rights to the material to a third party.
  
12. The method claimed in claim 11, further including the step of:  
archiving automatically the transferred material for the third party at a site remote from the third party.
  
13. The method claimed in claim 11, further including the step of:  
creating a pointer for the consumer to point to the transferred archival material.

14. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of: retrieving a copy of the protected material.

15. The method claimed in claim 1, further including the step of: loaning the material to a third party.

16. The method claimed in claim 15, further including the step of:  
archiving automatically the loaned material for the third party at a site remote from the third party.

17. The method claimed in claim 16, further including the step of:  
creating a pointer for the consumer to point to the loaned archival material.

18. The method claimed in claim 16, further including the step of:  
creating a pointer for the party to point to the loaned archival material.

19. A system for managing digital rights and automatically purchasing digital content, said system comprising:

- a digital rights clearinghouse that records transactions;
- a archive coupled to the clearinghouse that automatically backs up content represented by the transactions; and

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- c) a plurality of computers coupled to the clearinghouse and the archive that acquire digital rights to the managed content.